

The emergency

Venezuela has been in economic decline for several years. Dwindling food and medical supplies are now having a devastating effect on the basic health of all, especially children. A recent New York Times article at

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/17/world/americas/venezuela-children-starving.html>

documented riots in the streets over food shortages, and a 30% increase in infant mortality in 1 year. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are hit hard by this economic crisis. Many have fled the country. But we want to help give food and medical supplies to those that remain, and help spread the Gospel.

The goal

We want to raise \$1 million by December 31, 2018, to buy food and medicine and transport it to our brothers and sisters in Christ in Venezuela

The West Broward church of Christ (“WBCOC”) in Plantation, FL, leads a nationwide effort of churches of Christ and individuals who want to make a difference in Venezuela. We can’t save the whole country, but we can help many of our brothers and sisters. WBCOC led a similar effort in 2010 for our brothers and sisters in Haiti after their earthquake.

The plan

WBCOC will receive payments from other churches and individuals and deposit them in a bank account. Each check or donation is noted, and the donor gets an email acknowledging the donation. This provides complete transparency, and shows 100% of donations are used to fund this work. There is an accounting kept of all funds received and what they’re use for. Those funds will be distributed in several ways to purchase food and medical supplies in south Florida, Columbia, or Venezuela. Several places have been identified to purchase and ship these items. The advantage of using different proven companies is to have flexibility in getting goods to Venezuela. This also gives us a “backup” plan in case problems arise with a specific company.

WBCOC has several members from Venezuela, who are passionate about this work. They are using their direct knowledge of the situation to help get the goods to their former countrymen.

The shipments

The food and medical supplies will either be shipped from Sunrise, FL, Miami, FL, or Maracaibo, Columbia (next to Venezuela), or directly to 5 key distribution points to churches of Christ in Venezuela. All of these distribution points have been used before to ship and distribute goods to Venezuela.

The resources

Individuals who already have connections to Venezuela have come forward. Two have a company which ships vitamins, and is working on putting together a plastic-sealed “vitamin pack” which will provide basic nutrients. They also are producing a yogurt-like substance which acts like a meal. They are willing to sell these to us at their cost.

Another family has a long history of printing Bible tracts to explain the gospel plan of salvation in Spanish. This family will provide these evangelism tools at their cost. These tracts will accompany the food and medical supplies, and be distributed to our brothers and sisters and others who receive supplies.

The team

WBCOC elders and staff head up the administrative side at zero cost. We are actively soliciting our members, other congregations, and those with a national network in churches of Christ. For example, the Equip conference Orlando, FL, on June 29 is going to allow us to address the nearly 2000 attendees. Similarly, we will have representatives at the Pepperdine Lectureship in May and the Lipscomb Bible Lectureship on July 2-3.

The evangelism

It's our love for Christ and His message of salvation which drives our effort. In Mt. 25:40, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”. Acts 2:45 also shows the early believers sold their possessions and distributed them among those of them in need. We strive to reinforce the love Christ described for our brothers and sisters. Also, if a church of Christ in Venezuela gives supplies and tracts to non-believers, this will spread the love and knowledge of Christ to them. We will also ship Spanish-language Bibles along with the tracts.

The help

How can you help?

- pray
- spread the word
- individual donations
- special collections at local congregations
- contact WBCOC with groups/individuals who want to help, or send a check with the note “Venezuela Relief” to :

West Broward Church of Christ
12550 West Broward Blvd.
Plantation, FL 33325

(ph.) 954-475-7172

or go to our secure website to contribute:
<http://www.wbcofc.org/disasterrelief.html>

In His Love,
Michael Hursey and Russ Garner, for the Elders

Dear Editor,

I am a 3-year old girl named Annabella. I live in Venezuela. My mother and father just left me at an orphanage. They love me very much, but told me they cannot feed me anymore. They hope the people at the orphanage will be able to get food for me. I see riots in the streets, because there is little food or medicine and they are very expensive. My older brother joined a street gang that claims the piles of garbage from all the restaurants in their area. Sometimes he can bring home a few things for us to eat. But it is never enough for all of us.

Four days ago my baby sister went to heaven to be with God. Papa said she did not get enough to eat here. Mama was crying. But Papa took the baby out of her arms so she could be buried.

Mama and Papa are members of the Church of Christ. They say, "Jesus will take care of us." But we are still hungry. Where is Jesus? When is He coming?

As you quickly realized, this was not written by a 3-year old. But it could have been. It accurately reflects the current dire situation in Venezuela:

- 30% increase in infant mortality between 2016 and 2017
- drastic food and medicine shortages

Our brothers and sisters in Christ have nowhere to turn.

Where is Jesus? He's in you.

When is He coming? When you do something.

Jesus said, "When you do it for the least of these, you do it to me." Matt. 25:40

Will you help?

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